## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. An inventory planning method, comprising planning a safety stock
  2 level to cover uncertainty in demand over an exposure period with a desired service
  3 level based at least in part upon product availability from a spot market.
  - 2. The method of claim 1, wherein safety stock level planning comprises: estimating a maximum safety stock level of the product to cover uncertainty in demand over the exposure period with the desired service level based upon product availability from a non-spot market supply; and estimating an optimal safety stock level by reducing the maximum safety stock level based upon product availability from a spot market supply.
  - 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the maximum safety stock level estimation is based in part upon an estimation of lead time for obtaining the product from the non-spot market supply.
  - 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the maximum safety stock level estimation is based in part upon an estimation of lead time uncertainty for obtaining the product from the non-spot market supply.
    - 5. The method of claim 2, wherein the maximum safety stock level estimation is based in part upon an estimation of demand for the product.
  - 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the maximum safety stock level estimation is based in part upon an estimation of demand uncertainty for the product.
- 7. The method of claim 2, wherein the optimal safety stock level estimation is based in part upon a cost of obtaining the product from the spot market.
- 1 8. The method of claim 2, wherein reducing the maximum safety stock level comprises estimating a total cost of covering the maximum safety stock level

- 3 with a combination of product received from the spot market and product received
- 4 from the non-spot market supply.
- 1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the total cost is estimated based in part
- 2 upon an estimation of the expected amount of spot market product needed to cover
- 3 uncertainty in demand over the exposure period with the desired service level for a
- 4 given amount of non-spot market product.
- 1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the total cost is estimated based in part
- 2 upon a cost of obtaining the product from the spot market.
- 1 The method of claim 9, wherein the total cost is estimated based in part
- 2 upon a cost of obtaining the product from the non-spot market supply.
- 1 12. The method of claim 8, wherein estimating the optimal safety stock
- 2 level comprises minimizing the estimated total cost.
- 1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the optimal safety stock level
- 2 corresponds to a safety stock level that minimizes the estimated total cost.
- 1 14. The method of claim 2, wherein the optimal safety stock level is
- 2 estimated based at least in part upon a stochastic simulation of one or more random
- 3 variables.
- 1 15. The method of claim 2, further comprising ordering the optimal safety
- 2 stock level from the non-spot market supply.
- 1 16. The method of claim 2, further comprising ordering from the spot
- 2 market supply a product level needed to meet actual demand above the optimal
- 3 safety stock level and within the desired service level.
- 1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein ordering from the spot market
- 2 comprises navigating a web site providing information relating to the spot market.

- 1 18. The method of claim 1, wherein planning the safety stock level 2 comprises navigating a web site providing information relating to use of the spot 3 market to plan an inventory level.
- 1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein planning the safety stock level 2 comprises providing to an inventory planning engine accessible through the web site 3 information relating to product demand and information relating to non-spot market 4 lead time.
- 1 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing enterprise 2 resource planning based upon the planned safety stock level.

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